



Report to: Health and Wellbeing Committee, 18th July 2022

Report of: Deputy Director, Corporate Policy and Strategy

Subject: ACTIVE TRAVEL

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee notes the content of this report.

2. Background

- 2.1 "For most people, the easiest and most acceptable forms of physical activity are those that can be built into everyday life. Examples include walking or cycling instead of travelling by car, and using stairs instead of lifts. 'Active travel' (or active transportation or mobility) means walking or cycling as an alternative to motorised transport (notably cars, motorbikes/mopeds etc) for the purpose of making everyday journeys"¹.
- 2.2 The Department for Transport advise that "local authorities are well placed to plan and provide space for inclusive active travel infrastructure and accompanying behavioural change programmes. For Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and combined authorities, doing so is part of their responsibilities on highways and road safety"². Whilst Worcestershire County Council is the LTA in this area the City Council can play a significant role in promoting active travel.
- 2.3 At the meeting of this committee in November 2021 Members considered a report on establishing a potential role of Active Travel Officer and resolved to receive a further report at the following meeting in February.
- 2.4 At the February 2022 the Committee considered a proposal for an Active Travel Officer to be employed by the Council. The Committee agreed to recommend to Policy & Resources Committee the allocation of £100,000 of revenue funding to be able to recruit a dedicated Active Travel Officer for a 3-year fixed term period. This was later approved as part of the 2022/23 budget.
- 2.5 Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency at full Council in July 2019, the Council created and recruited to a new post of Environmental Sustainability Officer. This role developed the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030 approved by Council in November 2020 and has produced and coordinates delivery of the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan. The Plan was approved by Environment Committee which last received a progress report on the plan at its June 2022 meeting.
- 2.6 The Sustainability Action Plan includes three projects specific to active travel, namely ESS-03 Low emission business travel (for staff), ESS-04 Low emission commuting (for staff), and ESS-08 Active Travel (Town Investment Plan project).

- 2.7 At its December 2021 meeting, Personnel & General Purposes Sub-Committee agreed to provide and improve facilities to support staff to cycle to work. The approved report details how a £50,000 capital spend (subject to Council approval) will provide or enhance existing secure staff cycle parking and changing facilities at Council premises.
- 2.8 Worcester City Council has a number of current projects aimed at supporting its staff to cycle and walk instead of using a car. These are a Cycle to Work Scheme, staff e-bikes, the Sustainability and Health in Future Transport (SHIFT) scheme, Bikeability training and planned new facilities at council buildings.
- 2.9 The Worcester Town Investment Plan includes an allocation of £4.5M for an Active Travel project with a total value of £9M which will link new and enhanced routes with the existing network and provide a new bike hire scheme.
- 2.10 The business case for the Town Investment Plan Active Travel project was approved at Policy and Resources Committee in March 2022 and government funding was confirmed in April 2022.
- 2.11 This report updates on the progress with the above Active Travel projects.

3. Information

Active Travel Officer.

- 3.1 Funding has been allocated for a three-year post at the grade of Professional Technical level A (PTA). A job description and person specification has been drafted and the post will be advertised shortly. The new post of Sustainability Officer (Active Travel) will sit alongside the existing Sustainability Officer post (at the higher grade of PTC) that reports to the Deputy Director, Corporate Policy and Strategy.
- 3.2 It should be noted that the bike hire element of the Town Investment Plan Active Travel project also includes for a temporary staff resource for procurement, mobilisation and contract management of the hire scheme. This will equate to 12 months full time and then 4 years and then 5 years at 0.2 FTE.
- 3.3 These posts will work together to deliver against active travel and sustainability priorities as agreed by Members at Committee. It is recommended that an active travel action plan is developed and reported to this Committee.

Town Investment Plan – Active Travel Project

- 3.4 The project is unchanged from that proposed in the Town Investment Plan approved by [Policy and Resources Committee in January 2021](#).
- 3.5 A Treasury Green Book compliant 'five case business case' was approved by [Policy & Resources Committee in March 2022](#). The covering report and the executive summary to the business case provide a helpful overview of the project.
- 3.6 TIP funding of £4.5m will support investment of over £10m from Worcestershire County Council and Worcester City Council to deliver the following:

- 3.6.1 a new bridge across the River Severn between Kepax Park and Gheluvelt Park, known as The Kepax Bridge

- 3.6.2 Three new or improved active travel routes, which will be hard surfaced and of a suitable width for cycling and walking. Members have previously raised questions regarding lighting. Additional lighting is not included in this project for reasons of cost and in some locations impact on biodiversity. The routes are:
- 3.6.2.1 Extension of the surfaced section of the canal towpath to create a hard surfaced route from Diglis to Blackpole and Sixways.
 - 3.6.2.2 Surfacing of the existing route South from Diglis Bridge to link to Dace Close which gives access to the Ketch / Carrington Bridge underpass
 - 3.6.2.3 New surfaced routes around Ronkswood that will link Nunnery Wood School, the Ronkswood community, Worcester Royal Hospital & County Hall, and Lyppard Grange.
- 3.6.3 A bike hire / bike share scheme that will provide flexible hire by the minute with conventional and e-bikes picked up and returned at designated unmanned locations across the City. Full details of this scheme will be developed during the procurement of an operator.
- 3.7 The County Council (as Highway Authority) will deliver the majority of the project directly with the exception of the bike hire scheme which will be led by the City Council.
- 3.8 Policy & Resources Committee delegated authority to the Corporate Director Finance and Resources and the Corporate Director Planning and Governance to undertake further due diligence and complete the appropriate funding agreements for the externally delivered projects. Procurement of the Bike hire scheme, which is likely to be a multi-year contract with a value of several hundred thousand pounds, will be subject to further Member decision.
- 3.9 Details of highway works will be subject to the County Council's standard local consultation and engagement and details will be made available to local Members.

Staff Active Travel

- 3.10 Work has commenced to install changing facilities at the Guildhall and a secure bike shelter will be installed during the summer. Upgraded changing and bike parking facilities will also be installed at Astwood Cemetery and Warndon Depot in the Autumn.
- 3.11 The Sustainability and Health in Future Transport (SHIFT) scheme is due to be launched to staff imminently. This scheme allows staff to log commuting and work mileage by cycle which the Council will support through a donation to the Mayor's charity on a "per kilometre" basis.
- 3.12 The Parking team are now using e-bikes on a business-as-usual basis and are using them to access areas outside the city centre. The Council has two e-bikes for staff to use for travel whilst at work. These are currently at the Museum and Art Gallery can be booked by staff using the well-established room booking portal in MS Teams.
- 3.13 Staff regularly using e-bikes for work have received 'Bikeability' training and this is also being offered to all staff wishing to use the bike hire scheme.

3.14 The Council continues to offer cycle mileage expenses to staff and Members, the Cycle to Work salary sacrifice scheme which reduces the cost of cycle purchase for employees.

Action Plan and performance reporting

3.15 The Town Investment Plan Active Travel Project is included in the Health & Well-being Committee's performance scorecard and will also be subject to more detailed reporting as appropriate. Drafting an action plan for approval by and regular reporting to this Committee will be developed by the Active Travel Officer when in post.

Ward(s): All
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Background Papers:

- 1 Working Together to Promote Active Travel, A briefing for local authorities, Public Health England, 2016
- 2 Active Travel: A local Authority Toolkit, Department for Transport, April 2022
- 3 Active Travel Project, Report to Health & Wellbeing Committee, February 2022
- 4 Worcester Town Investment Plan, Worcester City Council [Worcester Towns Fund Board - Worcester City Council](#), January 2022
- 5 Active Travel Project Business Case, Report to Policy & resources Committee, March 2022